

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 7, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
Building 1, 9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Nora D. Volkow, M.D.
Director
National Institute on Drug Abuse
6001 Executive Blvd., Suite 5274
Bethesda, MD 20892

Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Admin.
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Secretary Azar, Director Collins, Director Volkow, and Asst. Secretary McCance-Katz:

We, the Ohio Congressional Delegation, write to express our strong support for the proposal developed by The Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, Ohio University, Case Western Reserve University and their partners, proposing that Ohio become a research site in the NIDA-SAMHSA HEALing Communities Study under RFA-DA-19-016.

Ohio is currently at the epicenter of a devastating national epidemic of substance use disorders and overdoses. This is highlighted by an overdose death rate of 46.3 per 100,000 individuals, which was the second highest in the country and more than double the national average in 2017. Moreover, the incidence of infants born exhibiting drug withdrawal symptoms increased nearly eight-fold between 2006 and 2015. It is clear the toll of addiction and overdose has been devastating to Ohio children, families, and communities.

In response to this crisis, Ohio has launched one of the most aggressive, comprehensive, and replicated efforts to reduce substance misuse and overdose deaths in the nation. As a result, our state's leadership and early investments in the infrastructure necessary to reduce overdose deaths make Ohio an ideal research site for this study.

This proposal, "Optimizing HEALing in Ohio Communities," would increase access to prevention and treatment services, decrease the misuse of opioids, and reduce drug overdoses and fatalities in Ohio. However, we also believe its impact would reach far beyond Ohio. We expect that the findings from this data-informed integrated approach will be scalable nationally

as communities across this country respond to the addiction crisis. We urge support for this important endeavor and urge you to give this proposal all due consideration.

Sincerely,



SHERROD BROWN
U.S. Senator



ROB PORTMAN
U.S. Senator



STEVE STIVERS
Member of Congress



MARCY KAPTUR
Member of Congress



TROY BALDERSON
Member of Congress



BILL JOHNSON
Member of Congress



MARCIA L. FUDGE
Member of Congress



BRAD WENSTRUP
Member of Congress



ROBERT E. LATTI
Member of Congress



MICHAEL R. TURNER
Member of Congress



STEVE CHABOT
Member of Congress



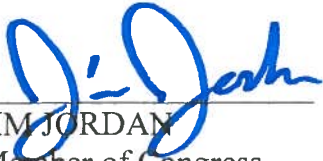
TIM RYAN
Member of Congress



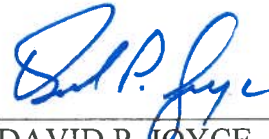
JOYCE BEATTY
Member of Congress



JIM RENACCI
Member of Congress



JIM JORDAN
Member of Congress



DAVID P. JOYCE
Member of Congress



BOB GIBBS
Member of Congress



WARREN DAVIDSON
Member of Congress